

WHCOA Topic Area: Our Community
Issue: Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Overview of Current Issue Status: Minority populations are expected to represent 25% of the older adult population by 2030 and tend to have poorer health status and are disproportionately at risk of preventable, costly chronic diseases and disabilities.

Challenges: The rapid growth and increasing diversity of the elderly population in the United States brings opportunities and challenges for the Aging Network to create and deliver culturally competent services because this population of culturally diverse older persons, including minorities, ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, and individuals with alternative lifestyles, have unique needs and there are significant communication barriers in planning and service delivery.

Resolution:

Include a National Education and Training/Certification Program for Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI Native American agencies under Title IV Education and Training in the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act that would reinforce and broaden the capacity of Aging Network leaders to meet the needs of a diverse older population.

Increase availability and access of culturally and linguistically competent staff and appropriate educational materials to ensure awareness of and access to services for older adults and their caregivers, including family caregivers.

Enhance the capacity of the Aging Network to implement evidence-based disease prevention programs, nutrition programs, and other supportive services that are relevant and responsive to a diverse older population.